

one Republican vote, and now they are criticizing the President and Democrats for not coming up with a plan before they introduce a budget.

Today the majority criticizes us for not providing leadership on Medicare. Well, they are the majority. Leadership is tough. If the Republican majority wants to continue to live in a dream world and think that they can balance the budget without cutting health care costs, they need to come up with a plan. Medicare should not be a cut.

THE TRAGEDY IN OKLAHOMA CITY

(Mr. GEKAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, following the tragedy in Oklahoma City, as was expected, tremendous rhetoric grew out of this fracas that occurred, both from the right and the left, calling for hearings on terrorism, international terrorism, domestic terrorism, paramilitary actions, all kinds of themes and theses that were propounded following that tragic event.

But we must focus once and for all on what happened there and then at that tragic moment. This was an act of mass murder, willful, deliberate, intended to kill people, and succeeded in that.

Our job, as the American people and the law enforcement and Members of Congress, communities together, must focus to bring those culprits to justice, bring them to the bar of justice, and then try them for murder and seek the death penalty. That is the analysis with which we must start in contemplating what happened in Oklahoma City on that fateful day.

The death penalty, which is favored by most people in our country, has never been more appropriate than in this particular situation.

GOP MEDICARE CUTS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today, the Republicans are over 2 weeks late in producing a budget.

I believe the reason for the Republican delay is that they do not know how they are going to keep all of their promises. Part of their answer to balancing the budget is to cut Medicare by over \$300 billion. This means that seniors will have to pay on average an additional \$900 in out-of-pocket expenses.

Now, Speaker GINGRICH is claiming that any Medicare cuts will be used to keep Medicare solvent. Of course he forgets to mention that Democrats have already worked to keep Medicare from going bankrupt in the past. In addition, it was Democrats, last year, who put forth an effort to reform health care and save Medicare.

I believe in balancing the budget and have always voted in support of a balanced budget, but I feel that any Medicare reform needs to arise in the context of health care reform. It is rising health care costs that are contributing to the deficit, not senior citizens.

OPPOSING THE AGREEMENT WITH CASTRO

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, the secretly negotiated agreement between the Clinton administration and Fidel Castro, announced yesterday, to return Cuban refugees to Castro's state security is unprecedented as well as immoral.

As Speaker GINGRICH declared yesterday, for the first time in history, the U.S. Government has agreed to cooperate with a Communist dictatorship's security forces in order to carry out the forced return of refugees who managed to escape.

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The administration now says that Castro has given it assurances that those refugees turned over to state security will not be persecuted, and yet they did not even ask Castro to abrogate his own law that requires jailtime for those caught trying to leave without permission. An administration official told me yesterday not to worry, that Castro has prosecutorial discretion. This, Mr. Speaker, this incident, this agreement, is shameful. It is another attempt to appease a totalitarian dictator who will still not be satisfied by the McGovernites who now control American foreign policy.

SAVAGE PLANS FOR MEDICARE

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the Gingrichites took a poll, and now they are scurrying here, there, and everywhere searching for a way to dress up their plan to slash Medicare.

The Gingrichites are understandably scared silly that the American public recognizes that what they have in mind is a raid of \$305 billion from the Medicare trust fund to fund last month's \$345 billion tax break for the privileged few.

This week the Gingrichites say, well, Medicare is in such bad financial shape that it needs surgery to survive. Well, I ask, "Why didn't they think about that last month when they were standing on this floor and they approved a contract tax bill that pulled out \$56 billion from the Medicare trust fund?"

That is right, \$56 billion from the same fund they now complain is going broke, and, having bled the trust fund, now they intend to start whacking off the benefits for America's seniors.

The Gingrichites do not plan to salvage Medicare; they plan to savage it, and I think the American people are smart enough to recognize savagery when they see it, to know the difference between savagery and salvation.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is our National Day of Prayer, and there will be events, big and small, commemorating this all over the Nation. Every faith, every religion, believes prayer is a good thing.

If we have any hope of overcoming evil things like we saw in Oklahoma City 2 weeks ago, we need to overcome evil with good—good things like prayer.

I hope all Americans will participate in our National Day of Prayer tomorrow, at least in a small way. I do not say this in any holier-than-thou manner, because I have as many faults as anyone.

But I do believe this Nation would be a better place if more people spent more time in prayer.

The Old Testament tells us:

If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.

Almost all of us need some type of healing—physically, emotionally, spiritually. I hope everyone will support the National Day of Prayer tomorrow.

REPUBLICANS TURNING TO MEDICARE IN ORDER TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, why have the Gingrich Republicans failed to meet the statutory deadline for passing a House budget resolution? The same Gingrich Republicans who were so proud of the fact that they met their hundred-day deadline for the Republican Contract With America, they read letters, fan mail, all sorts of comments from their districts about how proud they were, and yet when it comes down to the most basic thing, the spending bill for the Federal Government, the Gingrich Republicans have just dropped the ball.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason is pretty simple. The last item in the Republican contract was a Republican tax bill which adds \$600 billion to our national debt over the next 10 years. When they sit down and try to figure out this \$600 billion and how to make it up, they run out of solutions.

Well, where did they turn? They turned to one of the most important